

→ The information below was updated on Thursday, September 28th. Please note that the information below is subject to change. We will update this document daily as new information becomes available.

## Office Availability:

### **WILL YOUR D.C. OFFICE STILL BE OPEN FOR CONSTITUENT MEETINGS?**

The Longworth House Office Building will remain open to the public, but please consider planning your visit after the shutdown is over or requesting a virtual meeting with our staff.

Security wait times will be longer than normal, due to a limited number of open entrances. The Cafeteria will also be closed during this time.

Please call our office at 202-225-8020 if you have specific questions about scheduling a meeting in Washington during this period.

### **WILL YOUR SALEM OFFICE BE OPEN? CAN YOU STILL HELP ME WITH FEDERAL AGENCY REQUESTS?**

Our office has designated our full staff as essential workers so that we can adequately serve our constituents, even during a government shutdown. At this time, though, many federal departments and agencies furlough workers so their help desks may have little or no staffing.

You can still contact our office and we can contact an agency on your behalf. Each agency has created its own contingency plan, and some will be operating at greater capacity levels than others. Please expect delays or backlogs on some requests. Some requests, like passports, may not be fulfilled until the government resumes business.

Our office will continue to submit inquiries to federal agencies including requesting updates on constituents' behalf, submitting paperwork, and opening new cases, and we will provide you with an update as soon as it is available.

## **WILL I STILL BE ABLE TO TAKE A CAPITOL TOUR?**

The Capitol will be closed to the public, with no staff or guide-led tours permitted.

The Capitol Visitor Center, Library of Congress, and U.S. Botanic Garden, White House, and FBI Headquarters will also be closed to the public.

The Smithsonian Museums are likely to be impacted as well. During the last shutdown in 2018-2019, they were able to stay open for several days due to funds from the prior year, but eventually closed for 24 days.

## **Government Services:**

### **WILL MEDICARE, MEDICAID, OR SOCIAL SECURITY BE INTERRUPTED?**

Medicare and Medicaid will continue during a federal government shutdown, but you may experience difficulty reaching these agencies as some employees are furloughed. The Medicare open enrollment period running from October 15 through December 7 will be unaffected, although communications from the agency may be stalled or outdated.

A shutdown will also not impact Social Security benefit payments but be aware that new benefit verification and card issuance services have ceased, meaning new recipients may see delays in processing their claims. Though Federal employees would not be available to verify benefits or send out new cards.

### **WILL THE IRS BE OPERATIONAL?**

Previous shutdowns saw significant IRS furloughs and many employees walking off the job.

As of Thursday, September 28th, the agency has yet to make a firm determination about its operating status in the event of a shutdown. We will continue to monitor the status of IRS operations and update here.

## **WILL THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STILL DELIVER MAIL?**

The U.S. Postal Service is independently funded through its own services and will be unaffected by a shutdown.

## **WILL STUDENT LOANS CONTINUE TO BE DISBURSED?**

Pell Grants and Federal Direct Student Loans will continue to be obligated and disbursed during a shutdown, but only as long as carryover and mandatory appropriations last. However, department staff needed to carry out and support these functions are significantly reduced during a shutdown.

Free Applications for Student Aids (FAFSA), Pell Grant, and Federal Direct Student Loans, and servicing of federal student loans could continue for a “very limited time” under a shutdown. If the shutdown continues for an extended period of time, school districts, colleges, and universities may begin to experience funding shortages due to lapsed federal funding.

## **WILL THE JUDICIARY FUNCTION?**

The federal courts are expected to remain open and continue operations for at least two weeks.

Most court proceedings during the two week window will occur as scheduled, though if a lawyer from an executive branch agency like the Justice Department is furloughed due to a shutdown, hearings and filing deadlines may be extended. Some deadlines may be rescheduled if a federal agency attorney is not working during the shutdown, the official said.

If funds run out, the judiciary would operate on a more limited basis and keep enough staff “to support its mission critical work,” the official said.

## **FEMA AND DISASTER RELIEF**

According to the Department of Homeland Security, this would be the first time that a shutdown coincides with depletion of FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund. FEMA

would be forced to continue delaying support for community recovery to preserve resources for immediate life and safety concerns deployed in the wake of a catastrophic event—shifting disaster response burdens to the States, territories, Tribes, and local communities.

The Biden administration has started to ration federal disaster aid, delaying the delivery of about \$2.8 billion in grants so the money is available in the event of a crisis.

The authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program also expires alongside the government's funding at 12:01 a.m. Sunday. If lawmakers do not reauthorize the program, about 1,300 property closings each day could be delayed, according to estimates from the National Association of Home Builders.

## **HOW WILL OUR MILITARY BE IMPACTED?**

The Department of Defense will continue defending our nation and all military personnel will continue their usual duty. However, servicemembers may not receive pay during a shutdown if the Department of Defense runs out of funds before the shutdown is resolved.

Congressman Moulton was the first Democrat to sign on to the Pay Our Troops Act, which would ensure that no service member goes unpaid during this time.

The National Guard will continue to serve the nation, but will be severely impacted. The Guard's ability to provide timely assistance and support to Federal, State, and local agencies during current and future crises, respond to wildfires, and support state counterdrug programs will be degraded or must cease entirely. More than 28,000 furloughed employees and 30,000 full-time military members will continue to work without pay, significantly impacting the well-being of National Guard personnel and their families.

## **I RELY ON FOOD PROGRAMS LIKE SNAP AND WIC, WILL I KEEP GETTING MY PAYMENTS?**

SNAP, which offers food assistance to low-income families nationwide, receives funding annually and is expected to continue uninterrupted throughout October. If a government shutdown lasts beyond October, though, there could be serious consequences for SNAP recipients.

However, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) does not have sufficient funding to support normal operations beyond a few days into a shutdown – though individual states may have additional money to continue the program. More than 120,000 women, children, and infants in Massachusetts alone rely on the WIC program.

For more information about SNAP benefits, [click here](#) and for more information about WIC benefits, [click here](#).

## Travel and Recreation:

### WHAT HAPPENS TO NATIONAL PARKS?

All 425 national park sites are federally managed, and every year, the U.S. Congress must develop and approve a federal budget for all government agencies and programs, including the National Park Service. In a shutdown, all monuments, historic houses, battlefields and other units of the park system are at risk of closing Oct. 1.

The National Parks Service agency has not yet shared an updated contingency plan outlining its decision

During the 35-day government shutdown in 2018, the lapse in funding lasted 35 days, severely affecting parks and employees. Though parks remained technically “closed” during this time, most remained accessible to travelers, even if there would be no resources to support them.

### WILL AMTRAK CONTINUE TO RUN?

Amtrak is expected to continue to operate during the shutdown. While Amtrak receives federal subsidies, it is run as an independent business and not subject to the shutdown.

### HOW WILL THIS AFFECT AIRPORT WAIT TIME AND SECURITY?

Airports across the nation will remain open, but a shutdown will likely result in increased airport wait times. The extent of the disruptions will largely depend on how long a shutdown lasts.

During the last shutdown, ten percent of TSA agents nationwide eventually didn't come to work because they could not continue working without pay.

The training of new air traffic controllers would also cease, and work on technology upgrades could be disrupted. The U.S. travel economy could lose nearly \$1 billion for every week that the government is shut down, according to new analysis for the U.S. Travel Association

If you have air travel booked during this time, plan on getting to the airport earlier than usual.

## **CAN I STILL GET MY PASSPORT PROCESSED?**

According to the State Department's contingency plan, consular services such as issuing passports and visas will be offered domestically and abroad as long as the department has the budget to cover these operations.

However, the State Department could suspend passport services administered in buildings run by temporarily shuttered agencies.

## **What Can I Do to Help?**

The unsatisfying answer is that there is little that can be done right now to stop this crisis until House Republicans come to their senses and agree on a path forward. Democrats and many Republicans are prepared to vote on the compromise short-term spending bill that the Senate is currently working on.

In the meantime, you can call the Speaker's office and tell him to bring the Senate's compromise bill to the floor.

At home, check in on your friends and neighbors who might be impacted by a shutdown. This is a good time to look into public service opportunities in your community. Building community over our political divides is the antidote to this division and it will make us stronger as a country.